



Crossing the Jordan

Bible Passage: Joshua 1-4

Bottom Line: I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.

Key Passage: ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Big Picture Question: What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.

Christ Connection: *God went ahead of Joshua and the Israelites into the promised land. He showed His power to them so they would trust in Him. When Jesus came to earth, He showed His power so people would believe in Him and be saved from sin.*

10 Minutes SOCIAL: SETTING THE TONE OF THE EXPERIENCE

Freeze Dance

What You Need: music played on your phone

What You Do:

- Sing a song or play music.
- Instruct kids that they can dance and move to the music while it plays, but they must freeze in place when the music stops.
- Every so often, pause the music.
- Kids who keep dancing will sit down but may continue dancing in their seats when the music plays.
- The last kid dancing while standing up wins.

What You Say "When I paused the music, you had to stop dancing. In this series we are going to hear many stories about God's chosen people and how they make choices about following God. We are going to have fun learning about how God is always there for us and we can trust Him with our whole being because of it.

10 Minutes Worship: CELEBRATING WHAT GOD IS DOING

SONGS, OFFERING AND PRAYER

15 Minutes LARGE GROUP: COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGAGING WAYS

CONTEXT

Only one geographical barrier separated the Israelites from the promised land of Canaan: the Jordan River. When the Israelites arrived, the Jordan River was flooded due to spring rains and snowmelt. Any other time, the river would have been manageable, but crossing the swollen river would have been as daunting as crossing the Red Sea. (See Josh. 4:23.)

The Israelites had mourned Moses' death for 30 days (Deut. 34:8), but now this new generation looked to Joshua to lead them into the promised land. God had chosen Joshua and promised to be with him. Joshua prepared the people to cross the Jordan River, and they agreed to obey him as they obeyed Moses.

God gave Joshua a promise and a command. First, He promised to go before them and drive out all the people of the land. Then God commanded him to tell the priests to carry the ark of the LORD (a symbol of God's powerful presence) into the waters of the Jordan. Then the waters of the river would be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above would stand in one heap. When this happened, all of Israel would know that God was with Joshua.

All of the people passed over on dry ground. Joshua set up 12 memorial stones as a reminder of God's faithfulness in bringing Israel safely across the Jordan into the promised land.

The Israelites could do nothing apart from God. He was with them, and He was going to fight for them. In John 15:5, Jesus said, "You can do nothing without me."

As you teach kids this week, emphasize that God was still at work with His people. He was going to do even bigger things



for the Israelites—saving them from their enemies and one day sending them a Savior. The cross is our reminder of what Jesus has done for us: a miraculous saving we could never do for ourselves.

TEACHING FOCUS (Joshua 1-4)

For the next few weeks we are going to be learning about God's people as they moved into and conquered the land God promised them. We've talked about God's people in the wilderness. They had a chance to enter the promised land, but they did not trust God. As a result, they were stuck wandering for 40 years—long enough that all the people who refused to trust God had died! Their children were grown-ups now, and they were finally ready to enter the promised land. All that stood in their way was the Jordan River. Our story today is called "Crossing the Jordan."

*This story reminds me a little bit of the time God parted the Red Sea for the people of Israel to cross. I think that's on purpose. You see, at this point in the history of Israel, most of the people who were alive when God parted the Red Sea had died. The people who left Egypt and wandered the wilderness had changed a lot, and this new group—the children and grandchildren of those who were slaves—were learning to trust God. **God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross and gave the next generation a miraculous water crossing.***

*That's why it was so important for the twelve men from the twelve tribes to pick twelve stones to make a memorial. God didn't want His people to forget His power or His love for them. He wanted them to know Him and glorify Him. That brings us to the big picture question: **How can we glorify God?** Any ideas? [Allow responses.] Those are some really good answers. **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.** Say that with me: **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.** God deserves our love and obedience because He is powerful and good. When we love Him and obey Him, it glorifies Him.*

TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

- **God showed his power to Israel so that they would trust Him.**
- **He asked them to make a memorial because He wanted to make sure they never forget that He is powerful and can always be trusted.**
- **BL: I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.**
- When God does something for me, I should never forget it so that I will always trust Him.

25 Minutes SMALL GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Discussion Questions:

1. What did Moses tell the people in his farewell? (Be strong and courageous. God will go ahead. What did God tell Joshua as he became the new leader of the Israelites? (Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid; Josh. 1:9)
2. How did God help the people cross the Jordan? (God stopped the flow of the water so that it piled up on one side, Josh. 3:16)
3. What did Joshua do to remember the amazing thing God had done for His people? (He instructed men from the twelve tribes to take 12 stones from the middle of the riverbed and set them up as a memorial, Josh. 4:3-7)
4. Why do you think God helped His people cross the Jordan? Guide kids to discuss the fact that most of the people who had seen God's amazing miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea had died. God helped them cross the Jordan River in an amazing way to demonstrate His power to them and strengthen their faith in Him.
5. Why do you think God wanted the people to have the stones to remember what He did for them? Guide kids to discuss the fact that God proves His faithfulness again and again, but people tend to forget and walk into sin. God wanted them to have a reminder that He is good and trustworthy.

God told Joshua to be strong and courageous and to obey His commands. What commands do Christians need strength and courage to obey? Discuss the different commands Jesus talks about, such as loving God, loving people, sharing the gospel, and so forth

Activity: Treasure Stones



All Star Kids

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Kinder – 2nd grade

What You Need: plastic gems, coins or other treasures, flour (1 cup), used coffee grounds (1 cup), salt (1/2 cup), sand ¼ cup, water (3/4 cup), ziptop bags (1 per kid), sharpie, wet wipes for cleanup, Baking Instruction labels

What You Do:

- Follow the steps below to make treasure “stones” that the kid can take home to bake and harden.
- Mix all dry ingredients in a medium bowl.
- Slowly add water and knead until the mixture forms a dough about the same consistency as cookie dough.
- Take a small lump of dough and roll it into a lumpy ball shape, a bit larger than a golf ball.
- Press your thumb into the center of the ball to make a small cavity.
- Place a small gem, gold coin, or other treasure inside.
- Seal the treasure inside with more dough.
- Place the ball into a ziptop bag and seal it.
- Write on the kid’s names on the outside of the bag.
- Place the label on the outside of bag .

What You Say God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross. The stones that the Israelites took from the Jordan did not have treasures hidden in them, but they were used to remind the people of something valuable: God was with them. He is always faithful to provide for His people. You can take your treasure home and ask your family to help you bake the stone to make it hard. Then you can use it to remember what you learned today. I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.

Activity: Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster, Memory Verse Puzzle (printed and cut apart- 1 set per group)

What You Do:

- Review the Memory Verse as a group together out loud a few times.
- Lay the Memory Verse Puzzle on the floor/table face down.
- Take turns picking up a card at a time and putting the puzzle together.
- Keep going until all of the puzzle is together.
- Read the verse together one more time.

What You Say ” Our memory verse reminds us that we need to trust God. He knows better than we do about everything! This passage warns us against trusting our own understanding. God leads us to righteousness in Jesus. Trusting in ourselves for righteousness is sin. God provided a way out of that sin, it is through believing in His Son, Jesus.

Pray and Dismiss:

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Say:

“God, thank You for leading Your people into the land You promised. We can see Your faithfulness clearly in Old Testament stories, and we know that You are faithful to us today. Help us to trust You and give You glory by loving and obeying You. Amen.

5 Minutes HOME: PROMPTING ACTION BEYOND THE EXPERIENCE

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage your kids to tell their parents about our Big Picture Questions. What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands. BL- **I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.**